

## An Unfinished Letter.

"NEAR DEADWOOD, Sept. 20, 1855.

"DEAR JENNY:

"We reached here this morning—  
Tom Baker, Ned Leonard and I;  
So you see that, in spite of your warning,  
The end of our journey is nigh.

"The red-skins—'tis scarce worth a mention;  
Don't worry about me, I pray—  
Have shown us no little attention—  
Confound them—along on our way.

"Poor Ned's got a ball in the shoulder,  
Another one just grazed my side;  
But pahaw!—ere we're half a day older,  
We'll be at the end of our ride.

"We've camped here for breakfast; Tom  
splitting  
Some kindling wood off in the pines,  
And astride a dead cedar I'm sitting,  
To hastily pen you these lines.

"A courier from Deadwood—wemet him  
Just now, with a mail for the States—  
Ah! Jenny, I'll never forget him!  
For this most obligingly waits.

"He says, too, the miners are earning;  
Ten dollars a day, every man.  
Hullo! here comes Tom—he's returning,  
And running as fast as he can.

"It's nothing, I guess: He is only  
At one of his practical"—hang!  
And sharp through that solitude lonely  
The crack of Sioux rifle-shots rang.

And as the dire volley came, blended  
With echo from canyon and pass,  
The letter to Jenny was ended—  
He wrote lay dead on the grass.

GEORGE L. CATLIN.

## We Shall Know.

When the mists have rolled in splendor,  
From the beauty of the hills,  
And the sunshine, warm and tender,  
Falls in splendor on the rills,  
We may read love's shining letter  
In the rainbow of the spray;  
We shall know each other better,  
When the mists have cleared away.

We shall know as we are known,  
Never more to walk alone,  
In the dawning of the morning,  
When the mists have cleared away.

If we're in human blindness,  
And forget that we are dust,  
If we miss the law of kindness,  
When we struggle to be just,  
Snowy wings of peace shall cover  
All the pain that clouds our day,  
When the weary watch is over,  
And the mists have cleared away.

We shall know as we are known,  
Never more to walk alone,  
In the dawning of the morning,  
When the mists have cleared away.

When the mists have risen above us,  
As our father knows his own,  
Face to face with those that love us,  
We shall know as we are known.  
Love beyond the orient meadows  
Floats the golden fringe of day;  
Heart to heart we hide the shadows,  
Till the mists have cleared away.

We shall know as we are known,  
Never more to walk alone,  
When the day of light is dawning,  
And the mists have cleared away.

—Dining-Room Magazine.

## A TALE OF TAHITI.

Being the Experience of an Amateur

Savage.

BY SIDNEY DICKINSON.

It is not necessary to resort to novels for chapters of romance and strange adventure. Some passages in nearly every man's life read more strangely than the most improbable chapter of the most ingenious and absorbing romance, and men are generally far more interesting reading than books. It is well worth the traveler's while to cultivate the confidence of every man with whom he comes in contact; though his features may be unpromising and his intelligence apparently low, one may find underneath the rough exterior a mind sharpened by wide experience of the world, and a spirit developed by strange happenings. The richly embossed cover does not always enclose the most valuable book. I have seldom met a man whose personal history was not worth listening to. It is often a slow process getting at it, however, for men generally are apt to underestimate the interest of their adventures, or, if they see any thing singular in them, they usually lay particular emphasis upon some part which, while it has especially impressed them and seems the absorbing portion, is really a small matter compared with other incidents which they speak of slightly. Thus, the man who related to me the following facts seemed to consider them quite commonplace and not at all romantic, while he was inclined to particularly emphasize other experiences which, though they much interested him, were of only minor consequence to me, as being events in which any man might have been concerned. This man was a quartermaster on board one of the Pacific Mail steamship company's vessels, who was known to the officers and sailors as "Nick," and had, so far as I could discover, no other name. He was a Chil-

ian by birth, a short, thick-set and muscular fellow, with swarthy skin and black hair, and was a man of quiet language and manner. He was a little shy, withal, and for some time evaded my attempts to cultivate his acquaintance—which I desired to make from having heard that his history was an unusual one. Finally, one calm, starlit night, when a number of us were sitting around the edge of the fore-hatch, enjoying the cool breeze, Nick, whose spirits were tempered into complacency by the gift of a prime cigar, unfolded the roll of his experiences, and spun the following yarn:

He was born in Valparaiso, some 30 years ago, of parents in humble life, who gained a scanty subsistence by catching fish and gathering fruit, which they hawked about the city. As Nick grew up to boyhood, he was impressed into the service of the family and made to contribute to its support by selling the fish which his father caught and the fruit which his mother gathered. This was dull business, indeed, and, though an occasional fishing trip in his father's old boat was allowed him, it was quite insufficient to satisfy his love of the sea, and he looked longingly at the huge ships which folded their wings in the harbor after a long voyage, or spread them again for new flights. Often did Nick watch them from the shore as they melted away in the distance, and wish that taking thought could not only add one but several cubits to his stature, that he might at once become a man and embark for strange countries. But the prospects of attaining this glorious estate looked remote enough, for Nick was only 10 years old, and the 10 or 11 years more which lay between him and the point where the thorny foot-path of youth broadens into the smooth highway of maturity looked almost interminable to him, as to all of us at his age, though after we have passed them they look brief enough. Such projects and visions naturally incapacitated Nick for business, so much so, indeed, that floggings were his daily experiences.

One day, after a particularly sound castigation, Nick made a desperate resolve. There was a French frigate in the harbor, bound for Tahiti, and aboard of her was a man tattooed all over with beautiful blue and red anchors and ships and flags and women with fish's tails and numberless other designs which were as a sealed mystery to Nick, but which he supposed a voyage would make him quite familiar with. This living panorama of marine wonders had excited the boy's admiration from the first, and he had done all in his power by presents of fruit, etc., to win his friendship. So well did he succeed that the sailor offered to smuggle him aboard the vessel, secrete him till she sailed, and then, when it was too late to do any thing about it, introduce him to the Captain. This functionary, the sailor intimated, would be likely to give him a flogging which would quite eclipse any thing of his experience in that line, but he was convinced that all would thereafter be serene. Nick accepted the sailor's proposition, and was soon lying in a particularly inconvenient corner of the hold, in utter darkness and in the midst of an uncomfortably smelling cargo. Nobody discovered him, though the search for him extended even to the vessel in which he was hidden, and his friend, the polychromatic sailor, kept him well supplied with food and water. In a day or two the frigate sailed, and as soon as she was out of sight of land Nick was brought on deck by his patron, who presented him to the Captain as a stow-away. That worthy at once knocked Nick down, then hauled him up by the collar with an enthusiasm which segregated it from the rest of his coat, and beat him till his arm ached. Then he swore at Nick for half an hour in a blood-chilling manner, but as the oaths were all in French they did not hurt. He was then ordered into the maintop to cool off, and as he sat there above the pitching deck and began to be sea-sick, he wondered whether the charms of "a life on the ocean wave" had not been a little exaggerated. After a day or two, which he passed as much out of the Captain's range of vision as possible, Nick was installed as cabin-boy, and gained his first nautical knowledge in polishing the Captain's shoes, scouring up his epaulets and sword and carrying his spittoon around, getting an occasional flogging from his patron—who had a pleasant vein of humor, and flogged Nick in accordance with his stated idea that the rope wouldn't do him any hurt, and might do him good, and that if he was not at the time doing any thing worthy of stripes it was probable that he soon would be, and it might not then be convenient to chastise him. Besides these bits of philosophy, Nick gained a very

good insight into the French language, and by the time he reached Tahiti, a French possession, he could converse in it with considerable fluency. He made a great many friends among the sailors, too, and, on the whole, when the ship reached Tahiti he was rather sorry the voyage was at an end, and looked with pleasure to the long journey to France which the frigate was soon to take. But this experience Nick was destined never to enjoy, for when they reached the shore the Captain, who, like Mrs. John Gilpin, "had a frugal mind," gave him over to the care of a French merchant in the town, representing himself to be the boy's guardian, and pocketing the money which the trader offered in consideration of having Nick bound out to him for a term of years.

Thus Nick found himself in reality a slave to this man, who, though calling himself a merchant, was only a little, dried-up old French store-keeper, who sold rum and other such necessities of life to the natives, and performed a notable part in the degradation and almost complete annihilation of the people which these fiery liquors and their consequent vices have caused. Such a man was, of course, a hard master, and Nick soon found that his escape from service at home and his settlement in Tahiti had been merely a leisurely change from the frying-pan into the fire. Besides compelling the boy to wait on customers and do all the drudgery of the premises, in process of time his master installed him in the cuisine and initiated him in all the mysteries of cooking, which, while they afterward stood in good stead, were irksome enough at the time, principally on account of the blows and maledictions which attended the instruction. Now, among the native patrons of his master's grocery, there were several white people, one of whom, a gray haired and venerable looking Frenchman, had apparently taken quite a liking to Nick, and used often to converse with him. When drunk—which was a frequent occurrence—he was particularly affable, and it was a practice of his to burst into tears, and, seizing Nick's hand, swear that he was a lad after his own heart, who reminded him of a son buried in *la belle France*, and for whom he would shed his best blood, if need be. The constant recurrence of these protestations of regard so influenced Nick at last, that, upon one occasion, when his master had given him a tremendous horsing for forgetting to salt the omelettes prepared for his breakfast, he fled the house, and, hunting up his verbose admirer, besought him to save him from the rum-seller's brutality. The veteran was deeply moved, indeed, but in a manner Nick had little counted upon, for after reading him a lecture upon ingratitude in leaving a master who had rescued him from the perils of the sea and installed him in the best bar-room in Tahiti—which he seemed to consider the height of human felicity—he flogged him with as much vigor as weakness caused by age and dissipation would allow, and bore him to his old quarters, where Nick was again beaten and locked in an upper chamber in solitary confinement, while the veteran was presented with a demijohn of rum, and retired into a state of drunken seclusion, which lasted for over a week. Nick, smarting with wounds and ill-treatment, lay upon the floor of his prison till night-fall, and all the household had gone to sleep, when he managed to burst open the window, lowered himself to the ground by a rope made from the coverings of some goods stored in the room, and ran out into the night, he knew not whither.

While passing through the town he suddenly encountered a tall and fierce-looking native, whom he recognized as the chief of one of the wild tribes in the interior, to whom he had frequently sold liquor, for which, like the rest of his people, the chief had a consuming passion. This native, who was more intelligent than most of his race, and could speak a little French, interrogated Nick as to his destination, and, upon hearing the circumstances, offered to take him with him to his tribe, and train him as his own son. The natives were cannibals, and Nick was rather doubtful whether his introduction might not be the signal for a grand feast, at which he should figure as the principal baked meat, but he finally reflected that he might as well die at once as perish by inches with his inhuman master; moreover, the chief seemed sincere and friendly, and, if he fulfilled his promises, a career of such surpassing delights was open before him that to a boy of Nick's temperament it was perfectly irresistible—so he took the savage's hand, and accompanied him to his canoe outside the town. After paddling all night and a part of the next day, they reached a large native village

nestling in a valley among the hills and fronting upon a beautiful land-girt lagoon, where the water was crystal clear and little troubled by the waves of the sea. Nick thought he had never seen a more beautiful spot, and though he was a little alarmed at the actions of some of the savages, who flourished unpleasant-looking clubs and spears made of sharks' teeth and fish-bones in a very suggestive manner, he was soon relieved by the chief, who in a few words apparently explained his position in the tribe, and caused the demonstrative ones to throw aside their weapons and bear him on their shoulders in triumph to the home the great man occupied. Here the garb of civilization was removed from him, and the costume of the country, consisting of a quantity of blue paint and coconut oil, with the minor item of a narrow strip of cloth about his loins, was placed upon him. A native artist, with a fish-bone needle and a preparation distilled from the juice of certain plants, then tattooed his shoulder with a mark denoting that he was of the chief's household, his ears were pierced and ornamented with rings, and a plentiful repast of fish and fruit was set before him. Thus began his life among the cannibals—a life lasting for four years, and made interesting by many scenes and experiences which, if narrated, would too far extend the limits of this article. Suffice it to say that he thoroughly enjoyed it while it lasted, for at that age he was little troubled with thoughts of the future, and he was the leader of all the boys of his years by virtue of his adoption as the "chief's boy." Being endowed by nature with a strong constitution and excellent physique, he was soon able to outstrip all his companions in feats of strength and agility, and in time became the most successful hunter and fisher in the tribe. Though the want of clothing rather embarrassed him at first, he was not long in overcoming the feeling, and became so habituated to a state of nature in this respect that he had never since been quite able to enjoy the habiliments which a colder clime and the prejudices of society require. His relations with the tribe were generally very friendly, and as he grew to be 15 or 16 years old—a period at which people mature in that part of the world—many a dusky maiden began to look upon him with no unkindly eyes. Indeed, Nick was at this time little better than a savage. He had become as brown as the natives themselves; the Tahitian language was the only one he knew perfectly, and in most respects it would have been difficult to see in him any traces of the civilization which had treated him so unkindly, and which, indeed, he had for that reason tried to forget.

It was not perhaps strange, then, that the daughter of the chief, his patron, should have felt a preference for him over the other young men of the tribe who sought her favor, or that her father so interested himself in the match as to begin erecting a house for the young couple. Nick looked upon these preparations with apathy, and made no movement to interrupt them, for, though he had no particular fondness for the girl, he knew that any objection he might urge would be of no effect, and might get him into trouble. Besides, he had lived so long with the savages that he had almost forgot that he had once been a civilized being, and the thoughts of his former condition were, at best, only misty and undefined. But, at about the time which was to consign him forever to barbarism, an incident occurred which recalled him to his true position. The tribe of which he was a member had been for some time at war with another on a remote part of the island, and after a decisive battle, in which the former were victorious, the warriors returned to their town with a large train of prisoners. They were greeted with loud acclamations, and, on the following day, the instruments of butchery were arranged, fires built, and every preparation made for a hideous cannibal orgy. The scene which followed has been so often described as to require no repetition—it is enough to say that Nick, though nearly fainting at its horrors, was obliged, by his fears of exciting against himself the inflamed passions of the savages, to witness the dreadful feast and the fearful drunkenness which ensued. His refusal to join in the horrid revelry nearly cost him his life, as it was, and only by the interposition of his guardian, the chief, and his elected bride, his daughter, who faced the angry people and quelled their rage, was he preserved for further adventures. When night came, Nick, whose thoughts would not let him sleep, stole away from the village, which was wrapped in drunken slumber, and repaired to a favorite lookout of his upon the hill-side, overlooking the sea. His mind, which had

lain dormant during the four years of his life in that spot, had been suddenly awakened by the scenes of the day, and for the first time in years he began to think. The joys of a savage life had suddenly grown distasteful to him, and, as he reflected upon what the future might bring, he made a sudden determination to escape to civilized life again. Stealing down to the beach, he secured a light canoe, embarked in it without food or water and paddled away into the sea and darkness. He had no idea in what direction the town lay, but determined on following the coast till he reached it, and on the third day, having subsisted by running ashore occasionally and procuring supplies of fruit, he saw the town before him and an American man-of-war in the harbor. He was kindly received on board the vessel, where he was decently clothed and restored to all the outward semblance of his former self, and in her he made the voyage to New York. Since then he has constantly followed the sea, and, though sometimes pining a little for his former wild and free life, he always enters an emphatic protest against ever renewing the experience.

PENNSYLVANIA farmers fight shy of "widlers" now. Recently a farmer there contracted with a widow for a load of barley to be delivered upon a certain afternoon. The afternoon came but not the widow with the barley, but when the shades of night fell she came with the load and drove on the scales, where it was duly weighed. She did not know that the purchaser was near, and as she drove away toward his residence, lightly jumped on the rear end of her wagon with only the honest intention of riding home with her, intending to make his presence known. But before he could do so the lovely widow stooped over in the wagon, and, to the astonishment of her unintentional witness, began throwing out stones which she had concealed therein, and had been weighed as barley. There was a scene between the farmer and the widow of false weights, and now all the craft "beware of the widows," for their ways are dark.

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